BLM Biological Soil Crust Forum

Kanab, UT

August 6, 2014

Objectives:

- To share scientific information about biological soil crust on the Monument;
- To address specific questions about soil crust and about managing ecosystems in which soil crusts play a critical part; and
- To gain information that will support management alternatives in the Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment/EIS process.

Agenda

9:00 **Welcome**— *Cindy Staszak, Monument Manager*

9:15 **Panel Introductions/How we will proceed**—*Kathie Libby, Facilitator*

9:30 **Panel Session #1—What do we know about biological soil crusts in our planning area?**
Panelists will share facts about biological soil crusts, the role they play in the planning area ecosystems, and the impacts to area biological soil crusts they have observed. Panel will address questions developed by BLM, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders; panel will also address questions from the public.

12:00 – 12:30 Break

12:30 **Panel Session #2—What are our options for management actions?**
Panelists will share ideas on what actions can be taken to preserve and restore biological soil crust. Panel will address questions developed by BLM, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders; panel will also address questions from the public.

2:30 **Panel Session #3--What else don't we know?**
Panelists will discuss additional research questions that need to be addressed within the planning area.

3:30 **Panel Session #4—What did we hear? Where do we go from here?**

Planning Area managers address what they heard and describe next steps in planning process.

4:00 **Thank you and adjourn**

Questions Developed By Managers, Cooperating Agencies, and Stakeholders

9:30 Panel Session #1—What do we know about biological soil crusts on the Monument?

Where is biological soil crust found? How much of the Monument is involved?

How healthy is it? How does its health now compare to the last 50 years? 100 years?

What role do biological soil crusts play in local area ecosystems?

What's the relationship between biological soil crust cover and healthy grass and forb cover?

Do biological soil crusts compete with wildlife forage? With livestock forage?

What are the major kinds of disturbance in the planning area? Where and how are they impacting biological soil crust?

Does crust help with weed management? With erosion control?

There are areas that are not currently being grazed, yet we aren't seeing either healthy crust or healthy grass there. Thoughts?

12:30 Panel Session #2—What are our management options?

What kinds of management actions can support biological crust recovery? How long does it take for crusts to recover?

Are there areas where biological soil crust can be conserved, restored or preserved? Where does it need to be conserved or restored to maintain ecosystem health?

What is the potential for biological soil crust restoration?

Would this area respond favorably to a planned rotation/holistic management approach? How could it be done and what are the benefits and risks?

What management practices can we adopt to help BLM respond to year to year changes in conditions, long-term climate change, or drought?

2:30 Panel Session #3--What else don't we know?

What are the pressing research questions to be addressed for the planning area?